

Epistemology of *Ngelmu* in *Wedhatama* Fibers

Nur Alfiana

Email: evisuriyah@gmail.com

SMK Negeri 3 Purwokerto Jl. Jend. A. Yani No. 70, Purwokerto Timur

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to uncover the epistemology of *ngelmu* in *Wedhatama* Fiber. Science and *ngelmu* in Javanese tradition are different. If science is rational and intellectual, it is more *ruhaniah*, high value, and becomes the basis of human behavior. This research method is qualitative. Data obtained through literature studies. Journals and books that discuss *ngelmu* in *Serat Wedhatama* become databases and analyses. The result of this study is that in *Serat Wedhatama*, *ngelmu* is also not limited to theory and intellectuals alone, but a practice that is aware of the noble values of teachings (*piwulang*). Between science and deeds must be balanced. People who try to find *ngelmu* (*makrifat*) by going through *suluk* or Sufism are called Sufis or mystics.

Keywords: Epistemology, *Ngelmu*, *Wedhatama* Fiber

1. Introduction

Science is like a bone in the body that provides strength in actualizing physical functions; it is like a torch of darkness that guides man not to behave in a manner deviating from the truth, and is like a medicine for the sick that restores the functioning of all organs of the body, strengthens from weakness, corrects deficiencies and meets needs. Science is a vehicle that delivers the purpose of each owner according to the ideals of revelation, and is a differentiator between man and other beings, between the knowing and the ignorant, the good and the unkind, the good and the unkind (Najmudin & Said, 2020).

Thomas Kuhn said that science is led by the paradigm of normal science. That is research that is firmly upheld based on one or more scientific achievements. According to Kuhn science is not one but rather plural, scientists always work under one paradigm umbrella that contains ontological, methodological assumptions, and value structures. Kuhn's paradigm criticizes the view of Karl R. Popper who thinks that one theory of science, will only be accepted if it can collapse the old (previous) theory (Pari, 2018). Kuhn is more dynamic, while Popper tends to be deconstructive.

In Islam, as is commonly known that all branches of science on this earth are covered in the Quran. It is a holy book revealed to the Prophet Muhammad Saw to be delivered to mankind. Its content deals with the concepts of creed, morals, and the search for laws for human happiness.

“Alif, Lam, ra (here) a book whose verses are neatly arranged and explained in detail which is handed down from the side of (Allah) the All-Wise and all-knowing.” (Hud, 11:1).

This concept of studying can be related to Javanese terminology called *ngelmu*. *Ngelmu* is an abbreviation of two syllables namely "ngel" rather than the word "angel" which means difficult, difficult and so on, "mu" rather than the word "tinemu" which means to know or understand. *Ngelmu* means your angel tine which is difficult/difficult/difficult to understand, know, and so on (Mohamed, 2009).

There is a slight difference between your knowledge and your knowledge. If science is a systematic science, it is compiled using a certain and rational methodology. Meanwhile, your *ngel* can be known based on mental senses and a personal passion, not by rational activity (Mohamed, 2009).

The Qur'an in Islam is very influential in the process of acquiring knowledge. In *Centhini* Fiber it is explained that the science obtained based on Revelation is seen in the following quotation:

“Misalnya Syeh Amongraga memberi wejangan kepada Jayengwesthi dan Jayengraga, putera Ki Bayi Panurta di Wanamarta, tertulis pada jilid VI pupuh 352. Syeh Amongraga menjelaskan tentang syariat nabi, Nabi Muhammad SAW yaiu dalil dalam Alquran, Hadis Qudsi, Ijma, Kiyas, dan Khusus. Agar dalam menyembah Hyang Widi harus kuat memegang dalil, yang utama: syariat, tarekat, hakikat, dan makrifat. Isi syariat adalah tempatnya orang yang pantang segala ria, berguna bila diberi rezeki. Ilmu hakikat itu jika meninggal- kan syarak akan dijauhi dan hidupnya terlunta-lunta, disia-siakan, tidak disukai pada masanya” (Wibawa, 2013).

"For example, Shah Amongraga gave a message to Jayengwesthi and Jayengraga, the son of Ki Bayi Panurta in Wanamarta, written in volume VI pupuh 352. Syeh Amongraga explains the sharia of the prophet, Prophet Muhammad SAW said dalil in the Qur'an, Hadith Qudsi, Ijma, Qiyas, and Special. To worship Hyang Widi must be strong in holding the postulates, the main ones: sharia, order, essence, and makrifat. The content of Shari'a is a place for people who abstain from all joy, useful when given sustenance. That science of essence if he dies, he will be shunned and his life slunta-lunta, wasted, disliked in his time."

Ngelmu in Javanese tradition is closely related to Islam. Syeh Amongraga, in *Serat Centhini* explains that "sharia is the principle of *ngelmu*, which is abstinent from all joy and pride." (Wibawa, 2013). In the sense built by Damardjati Supadjar, *ngelmu* in Javanese tradition aims to manunggal kawula-gusti. In Javanese khasanah, kawula-gusti is a conversation about the dimensions of birth and mind, about the worshippers and the worshipped. So regarding functional relationships spatially and temporally. Damardjati exemplifies in the Ruci God Fiber that, who understands the body and mind as if the quality of sarira batara (kawula-gusti) is achieved. Truly that he is His servant means that he is a true mirror so that God and His image are truly unobstructed by the slightest impurity. It was marked by continuous corrections to him, for his statement of me-an (Alwi, 2020).

Ngelmu in Javanese spirituality leads man to inner happiness that cannot be measured by matter. Thus, in Javanese society, the slogan is known: *sak beja-bejaning manungsa yaiku wong kang migunani marang wong liya*. By relying on the philosophy of *ngelmu* are, the more it contains the more it looks down (*ngelmu pari tansaya is tansaya tumungkul*), in fact, people who have a high and have a lot of knowledge are more condescending and place their position according to their abilities (K. S. S. Nugroho, 2020). Therefore, this paper aims to explain the construct of *ngelmu* epistemology in Javanese culture.

In addition to *Ce nothing* Fiber, the concept of *ngelmu* is also in *Wedhatama* Fiber. *Wedhatama* fiber is found in the 2013 curriculum, namely in class X semester 1 with basic competencies to accept, be grateful, live, and practice the religious teachings it adheres to. Therefore, teachers are required to understand the aspects of religiosity in the fiber.

Etymologically *Wedhatama* Fiber consists of three syllables, fiber, *wedha*, and *tama*. Fiber means writing or work in the form of writing. *Wedha* means knowledge or teachings, and *tama* means main or good, high and sublime (Dhoni Zustiyantoro & Fahmi Abdillah, 2016). Thus, *Serat Wedha Tama* has the meaning of a literary work that contains knowledge to be used as teaching material in achieving the virtues and nobleness of human life and life (Wikipedia).

Tembang-tembang in *Wedhatama* Fiber is categorized as a type of *tembang macapat*. There are several notions of *tembang macapat*. First, it can be read per four types (syllables) for each fragment. Secondly, the *macapat tembang* consists of the word *maca cepet* (how to read it quickly). Third, *tembang macapat* belongs to the type of *sekar (tembang)* classification four. The classification of one is *Sekar ageng*. The second classification is *Sekar sapdadirga*. Classification three is the middle of the . (Endraswara, 2006; Suwarno, n.d.).

In *Serat Wedhatama*, there are many values and knowledge that can be the basis for the search for Javanese society. For example this stanza:

*Magkono ngelmu kang nyata
Sanyatane mung weh reseping ati
Bungah ingaranan cubluk
Sukeng tyas si punggung anggung gumrungung
Ugungan sadina-dina
Aja mangkono wong urip
(Such is true science
It's actually just pleasing to the heart
Happy to be considered stupid
Happy inwardly if insulted
Unlike the Fool who is always arrogant
Want to be praised every day
Don't be like that living in a relationship)"*
(Dhoni Zustiyantoro & Fahmi Abdillah, 2016).

Pieces from *Wedhatama* Fiber (Pangkur 5/1-7) state the nature of knowledge that can make a person have a true *ngelmu* attitude. The temple teaches people to always learn, study, and stay away from arrogance and takabur.

Serat Wedhatama is a balanced book containing moral teachings written by KGPAA Mangkunegara IV, with the childhood name Sudira, who was born in 1811. KGPAA Mangkunegara IV was the grandson of Mangkunegara II of the maternal line and cousin of Mangkunegara III. He became the ruler of Mangkunegaran (1853-1881), a duchy (small kingdom) founded by KGPAA Mangkunegara I or RM Said, who was also famous for the nickname Prince Sambernyawa. The duchy was established under the Treaty of Salatiga in 1757, two years after the Treaty of Giyanti which divided Mataram into two (palihan nagari), namely Surakarta Hadiningrat and Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat. Based on the Salatiga Treaty, the territory of Surakarta Hadiningrat was reduced again by the mangkunegaran territory (AR, n.d.).

According to Munandar & Afifah (2020), *Wedhatama* fiber is called *Kita Jawa Kuno* (Kitab Piwulang and Paweling) which was popular among the Javanese people during the reign of KGPAA Mangkunegara IV. Sufism is the dominant scientific pattern in the fiber, because it explains the image of humans from birth to death, in addition to the dimensions of *ngelmu*.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to decompose the epistemology of *ngelmu* in *Wedhatama* Fiber. With the hope, the concept of *ngelmu* in fiber in the traditions of the Javanese people can be disseminated and applied to their respective regions and cultures.

2. Research Methods

This research applies a qualitative approach using descriptive methods. According to Sugiyono, descriptive research is a study conducted to examine independent variables and does not compare with other variables (Sugiyono, 2012). The descriptive method is used to be able to clearly describe the construct of *ngelmu* epistemology in the Javanese tradition.

The description of the data in this study refers to the concept of *ngelmu* in general. Then it was associated with Javanese culture. This research data was obtained through documentation of books and scientific journals that discussed *ngelmu* in Javanese culture.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Epistemology of Ngelmu

Epistemology is studying the process of gaining knowledge (Knowledge). It is pursued through two paths or methods to acquire knowledge using the nature of human abilities, namely reasoning, reason, ratio, abstraction (according to Aristotle), and intuition (Plato) (Nooryanti & Muhadiyatiningasih, 2021). Epistemology comes from the Greek word *episteme* meaning "true knowledge", "scientific knowledge, and logo meaning theory. Therefore, epistemology is a scientific discipline that is evaluative, normative, and critical. Evaluative of the meaning of judging, it assesses whether a belief, attitude, statement of opinion, or theory of knowledge is justified, guaranteed its truth, or has a basis that is reasonably accounted for. Normative means determining norms or benchmarks (Susanto, 2021).

In Javanese terminology called *ngelmu* is an acronym for two syllables, namely *Ngel* from the word *angel* (difficult, difficult, and difficult), and *Mu* from the word *tinemu* (know, understand). So, it can be concluded that your *ngel* is your *angel* *tine*. *Ngelmu* means "secret teaching for life" (Harsena et al., n.d.). In Islam it is called Sufism, in Javanese teachings, it is called *suluk*. Science is systematic knowledge, having certain objects arranged according to methodology using the inner senses as well as a personal passion, with the brain or mind (Ediyono, 2013). In the book *Wedhatama* by KGPAA Mangkunegara IV, it means "ngelmu" as follows:

Ngelmu iku, kelakone kanthi laku

Lekas lawan kas

Tegese kas nyantosani

Setya budaya pangekese durangkara (Yunos S, 2009):

(True knowledge can only be achieved by practice and is only useful, if translated into everyday behavior. Behavior with earnestness will produce inner satisfaction. Thus you will gain an awareness that can erode snobbery).

Furthermore, it is explained further about "ngelmu" as follows:

Basa ngelmu, mupakate lan penemu

Pasahe lan tapa

Yen satria tanah Jawi

Kuna-kuna kang ginilut tri prakara

It means the following:

Science must be the result of personal search and experience

Thus, the application of such science, in everyday life, gave birth to three main properties, which have been known since antiquity.

As for what is meant by three main properties, they are:

Lila lamun, kelangan nora gegetun

Rima yen ketaman

Sak serik sameng dumadi

Tri legawa nalangsa srah ing Bathara

First, being Willing means not regretting, if you lose something. Second, Accepting which means staying patient, even if reviled. Third, Complete surrender to the Divine will (K. Nugroho, 2020). A person who possesses these traits is a person who already understands the essence of religion. He was sober, had gained enlightenment, and found his true self. So your ngel can only be achieved by practice i.e. "inner practice" or spiritual path. The Spiritual Path in sufism is called tarekat (As-Salam & 2016, n.d.) Or to borrow a term from Lao-Tze, namely Tao. Meanwhile, all efforts that are put into achieving the inner journey are called "suluk".

Therefore, what is called Angelou is the knowledge that is inward or spiritual. In sufism ngelmu batiniyah is called makrifat. Hamka writes that "makrifat means the end of the journey of science" (I, 2010) Thus, it is in line with what is written in Wedhatama which says "pucuking maring makrifat". It's my thing, it's going to sell. Thus, what is meant by ngelmu in the pupuh pucung of stanza I, cannot be other than with the word and meaning "the top or end of knowledge" i.e. makrifat. Meanwhile, what is meant by the word practice is inner or it can also be called tarekat or suluk. People who try to find ngelmu (makrifat) by going through suluk or Sufism are called sufis or mystics. So people who seek to achieve ngelmu makrifat or "perfection" use more taste, rather than ratio (Litera & 2013, n.d.).

From this explanation, it can be concluded that your ngel has properties, including (Wardhana, 2011): 1) Known by mental practice or spiritual passion; 2) Ngelmu iku kelakoe by practicing (understanding or knowing after being lived alone); 3) Your ngelmu is based on passion, self-inflicted feelings; 4) Ngelmu di can be with the practice of tapa brata (reduce worldly pleasures, prevent dahar and guling (dahar= eat well, guling= sleep); Ngelmu is run through (Heneng=concentration, Silence=With a clear mind, Heling=always remember God); 5) Learning to dig you is the pinnacle or end of knowledge (The Real Knowledge of God); 6) More use of taste than ratio, some even mention it as the sixth five senses (Filsafat & 2009).

The term ngelmu as the search for identity and the system of the source of knowledge (kawruh), generally emphasizes the inner aspects of a person. According to Suryo Ediyono (2013) through his article entitled "golek ngelmu", ngelmu as a human identity in Javanese culture (Kholil, 2008). Furthermore, reviews from Yayan Herdiana, Muhammad Ali, Aan Hasanah, Bambang Syamsul Arifin (2021) said that knowledge is a source of moral motivation that only emphasizes the mind, touches the heart less on the emotional side, feelings about oneself, and others. According to E. Gerrit Singgih ngelmu is the existence of the Javanese towards themselves in the midst of this universe, it contains wisdom, life attitudes, a place in the totality of life and the search for harmony, safety, and perfection (Al-Hamid et al., n.d.).

In the system of practice, ngelmu has a socio-religious dimension and a divine spiritual value. Your ngel can be said to be a form of authority over others. In the social religious dimension, the science of ngelmu as the virtue of the life characteristic of Javanese culture plays a role in realizing the values of primacy in social relations. In Javanese culture, ngelmu is the peak of the highest achievement of the individual in the course of tangible governance in the form of knowledge and abilities needed for others as followers (K. Nugroho, 2020).

3.2 Ngelmu in Javanese Culture

According to Koentjaraningrat, culture is a whole system of ideas, actions, and results of human work in the context of community life that is made to belong to man by learning. Culture comes from the Sanskrit word buddhayah, which is the plural form of buddhi which means mind or reason (Sedyawati et al., 1993). Thus culture can be interpreted as things related to reason. As Kusumohamidjojo (2009) said that culture in the sense of culture as a whole dialectical process born from the complexity of thought, soul, and conscience which is realized as the complexity of human behavior and work in the form of materialization (things), ideas (ideas) that are adapted, applied, standardized, developed, continued through the learning process, and adapted in common life.

Sutrisno (2008) dotted with the notion of culture according to Peursen, states that today's culture is understood as a productive activity and not its production. Culture is not something frozen and finished, but something that is always in the process of change. Socio-political life cannot be considered one-time and complete, but rather is in the process of increasingly allowing a more humane life. Technological and scientific discoveries are increasingly allowing a man to live freely in nature. With the dynamic concept of culture, the meaning of culture can be understood more precisely (Sutiyono, 2013).

In the Indonesian context, culture is not solely seen as ancestral heritage, name, or something that is being created today through national development. Culture is not only a reality of the past but also a necessity of the future that is structured in a cultural strategy (Kholil, 2008).

About cultural elements, based on cultural elements found in all nations of the world, there are seven cultural elements, namely: (1) language, (2) knowledge systems, (3) social organizations, (4) living equipment systems and technology, (5) living livelihood systems, (6) religious systems, and (7) arts (Koentjaraningrat, 1979).

Ngelmu in Javanese cultural traditions is closely related to the activity of mental processing and taste. Soesilo describes some of the qualities of your ngel, you: 1) known by mental practice or spiritual passion, 2) ngelmu kelakone kanti practice that intends to understand or know after being lived by yourself, 3) based on passion, self-practiced feelings, 4) found by tapa brata practice (reducing worldly pleasures), prevent dhahar (reduce delicious food) and bolster (and sleep), 5) run with three things: heneng (concentration), silence i.e. clear thoughts, healing (remember God), 6) learning to be the top or end of knowledge, 7) using more taste than ratio (Soesilo, 2000).

In Javanese culture, ngelmu is the peak of the highest achievement of the individual in the course of tangible governance in the form of knowledge and abilities needed for others as followers. An encounter between fellow Javanese, from different parties, for example between Christianity and Islam, is colored by an understanding of ngelmu. According to E. Gerrit Singgih ngelmu must be understood in the sense of the existence of the Javanese towards himself in the middle of this universe, among which is connected with the Javanese view of wisdom, attitude to life; and the totality of his life as the search for harmony, salvation, and perfection (Adipati, 2022).

3.3. *Ngelmu in Wedhatama Fiber*

The idea or idea of KGPAA Mangkunegara IV in writing *Wedhatama* fiber is from looking at socio-political conditions and the state of oneself and society. Therefore, he created this work called *Wedhatama* fiber. The moral crisis that occurred at the beginning of the XIX century made the king and the poets compelled to write piwulang fibers so that the noble values of religion and the customs included in the fibers could be a pedometer when facing a multidimensional crisis. The crisis that has befallen all walks of life cannot be allowed to drag on, because it can worsen the condition of the Surakarta kingdom. As the king and poet of the palace, Mangkunegara IV advised children and the entire younger generation in the wake of a moral crisis and a shift in the traditional values of the palace. It is hoped that it can improve morale by displaying tata krama teachings with a combination of Javanese and Islamic cultures. Therefore KGPAA Mangkunegara IV wrote *wedhatama* fiber as a vehicle for moral education aimed at Javanese society to shape disposition and behavior.

Serat Wedhatama is one of the ancient Javanese books containing piwulang and sublime piweling which contains the concepts of divinity, society, and humanity. The concept of divinity is formulated with the religious term ageming aji. The implementation goes through four stages, namely, body worship, creation prayer, soul worship, and taste worship. The concept of society is expressed by the term amemangun karyenak tyasing sasamawich means to do good to please others. Relations between communities are maintained to be harmonious and harmonious so as to create peace. Meanwhile, human values aim to achieve a virtuous degree of jalma sulaksana (Jatmiko, 2014). Semantically *Wedhatama* Fiber consists of three syllables, namely: fiber, wedha, and tama. Serat means writing or work in the form of writing, wedha means knowledge or teachings, and Tama comes from the main word which means good, high, or sublime.

Based on the collection of fibers collected by Ki Padmasusastra in his book entitled *Serat Piwulan Warna-Warni Anggitan Dalem Swargi KGPAA Mangkunegara IV* published by Albert Rusche & Co. in 1906 in Surakarta, the official publication of Mangkunegaran, and the manuscript collection at the Central Museum of Jakarta, *Wedhatama* fiber consists of 72 stanzas. *Wedhatama* is the main knowledge of noble ethics, good ethics, and noble morals. *Wedhatama* fiber teaches how a man can forge souls in life in the world. With a strong and resilient soul, humans will live a religious life that is following their abilities. It also teaches us to value people not because of their age, degree, or position. *Wedhatama* educates a person who is devout in carrying out his religious worship. In this view, a person is not considered religious if he has not embodied only words and deeds.

According to Mangkunegara IV, what is meant as science is as he stated in the pupuh Pucung stanza 1 *Serat Wedhatama*:

*Ngelmu iku Kalakone kanthi laku;
Lekase lawan kas;
Tegese kas nyantosani;
Setya budya pangekese dur angkara .*

The translation of the above quote is that knowledge that we can obtain through practice (learning, practice, etc.). It begins with cash (Cash: akas, carry out vigorously, and earnestly). The point is that cash is to give strength, sturdiness (nyantosani); and to be firm in resisting the number of wrath.

Thus, *Serat Wedhatama* is a work that contains knowledge to be used as teaching material in achieving the virtues and nobleness of human life and life. *Serat Wedhatama* is not intended as a yenang work aimed at teaching Javanese leadership, as seen from the meaning, that *Serat Wedhatama* is a work that contains knowledge to be used as teaching material in achieving the virtues and nobleness of life and life of mankind. Siswokartono also said that *Serat Wedhatama* is a work containing the teachings of ngelmu luhung or high knowledge.

4. Conclusion

The term *ngelmu* as the search for identity and the system of the source of knowledge (*kawruh*), generally emphasizes the inner aspects of a person. So what is meant by *ngelmu* in the pupuh pucung of stanza I, cannot be other than with the word and meaning "the top or end of knowledge" i.e. *makrifat*. Meanwhile, what is meant by the word practice is inner or it can also be called *tarekat* or *suluk*.

Meanwhile, in *Serat Wedhatama*, *ngelmu* is also not limited to theory and intellectuals alone, but a practice that is aware of the noble values of teachings (*piwulang*). Between science and deeds must be balanced. People who try to find *ngelmu* (*makrifat*) by going through *suluk* or Sufism are called *sufis* or *mystics*. So, people who seek to achieve *ngelmu makrifat* or "perfection" use taste more, rather than rational.

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